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SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE VIEWPOINTS IN ADVANCE OF JANUARY 28-29
GAERC

REF: SECSTATE 7679

Classified By: Dana M. Brown, Pol-Econ Officer, Embassy Lisbon
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

- ¶1. (U) Deputy EU Correspondent Ana Filomena Rocha responded to the reftel points with Portugal's views in advance of the GAERC meeting on January 28 and 29. She offered frank insights into the internal EU discussions on Kosovo, Iran, Kenya, and on the new practice of "restricted sessions."
- ¶2. (C) Kosovo: Rocha acknowledged U.S. concerns regarding delaying Kosovo's declaration of independence but confided that Spain had urged other Member States to delay recognition until after the Spanish elections on March 9. She said the meeting and draft conclusions would focus on Serbia's relationship with Europe and the need for Belgrade to cooperate with the ICTY.
- ¶3. (C) Iran: Rocha stressed that Portugal stood ready to impose a new round of sanctions in conjunction with EU partners. Nevertheless, she predicted that the EU would wait until the UN resolution was approved and ElBaradei reported his findings in March before taking action.
- ¶4. (C) Kenya: Europe was divided over how best to respond to Kenya's political crisis, according to Rocha. She mentioned that Portugal resisted a proposal by the Commission and some Member States to send a Special Envoy to Nairobi. Portugal supports discussions with the African Union and with neighboring nations, and believes that adding a European Special Envoy would send the wrong message, specifically that Europe does not trust Africa to solve its own challenges.
- ¶5. (C) Restricted formats: Rocha noted concern over the recent closed door meetings on Kosovo and ECOFIN that had excluded several member states, such as Portugal. Although she acknowledged that it was difficult to reach consensus on sensitive policy issues, she stressed that Slovenia was the first Council president that had used the restricted meetings, seemingly to limit dissent. She expressed her hope that the format would be used sparingly and be eliminated by the end of Slovenia's term.
- Stephenson